

# Bard

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# Bard

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The essence of it  
is a kind of revival  
which for a leaf like me  
would mean the tree again

the spurt of sap  
up into the slow light  
the hardening glance  
to be reborn

is to be them all  
before me  
and then be me  
deliberately this time

not as a stranger  
coming to town  
carrying my fences with me  
in case I learn to speak.

7 January 2002

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it might be there  
it might be hidden in it

it might make a sound  
like a fox in the bush  
not exactly calling

it might be you've never heard it  
and I've just dreamed it all these years

it might be the reason for me  
and you have reasons of your own

7 January 2002

## TERRORISM IS BUILT INTO THE SYSTEM

Think of how to birds born since last winter  
a year's first snow must seem an overwhelming  
incomprehensible catastrophe. I'm sure they  
at least never quite believe the spring again.

7 January 2002

## OF GIANTS

To find the pen  
suddenly in hand  
and no word to say  
to tell the strife of feeling

in the giant's heart  
he takes back  
from the beech grove  
takes back from the gull  
the stone the cloned  
personalities  
templated on the projection  
of his fear of rejection,  
his so-called affections,

he tells the truth  
he has lost himself  
in the desert  
his feelings  
those stupid angels  
who scream at him  
from inside  
a harp he is  
that others play  
and only he can hear

the privilege of pain.  
And he wants  
to be done with it  
and feel from each  
moment out  
into a clean world  
virgin to his glance

comma after comma  
he writes it down

yet every word too  
seems to take  
more of him away.

2.

The giant is a creature whose heart is too big for its body but too small for the world. He hides it inside other beings, who all unknowing help him carry it. Then it happens that the giant is stuck to them until his heart comes back. What a war it is, and how hard to win that heart to come back home. The separation from the heart and the chase for the bearer of the heart and the agony when the heart must be reclaimed, and the torture of actually reclaiming it — these boring and preposterous anguished amusements are what the giant means by his ‘feelings.’ Meantime the real pain of the world is all around him, neglected or not even noticed. This is why, in folklore, giants are always reckoned stupid. Sometimes (is it in the *Vafþrúðnismál*?) the giants know the right words. But not the tune. There is too much noisy pain in them, feeling this and feeling that, wanting, fearing, wondering, all the clatter of desire. They don’t know the tune, the tone, that holds the words, worlds, together. So they perish.

7 January 2002

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and the snow persisted  
falling into itself  
and the plows make beast noises as they turn  
annihilating the democracy of the fall

heaping and scouring clear  
a hierarchy of roads.

7 January 2002

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And full well I know that at this white hour  
something I can't conceive is traveling towards me

singing like a cello it comes  
standing like a woman hands on hips  
looking back over her shoulder at me

she comes my way backwards  
as if my future is her past

you who were always lost are always arriving.

7 January 2002



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What happens to Romeo is the tragic version of what happens to Demetrius and Lysander. *He believes the evidence of his senses.* That's the end of him. He thinks she's dead because he fails to see her living. I say this and I know this, and still I want to believe only you.

7.I.02

TO THE SAD ANGEL OF MY AND EVERY HISTORY

Stand, stylites, stand on a column  
and be gold

be at the neck of a star  
be a city's middle

windpipe of a word  
forever on the way to being spoken.

7 January 2002

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Telling all who come  
that she is the one  
and I believe it  
for an hour or a day  
sometimes even one whole morning after

Which shows how much time is worth,  
that sad tract of unbelieving

what thought my whole life meant.

7 January 2002

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the curve of the hour  
passes  
time is fractal'd with attention

if you go into the curve  
and become its pure extension  
time is continuous and infinite

but go outside the curve  
into the eternal — which is the  
opposite other of infinite —

and there is freshness, *soma*, free.

Beyond the curve is time unbound.

2.

The closer you look, the more things are happening. Time is the plane of happening, and our attention to it forms a curve, fractal, a never-ending always bending line. This line never yields a discontinuity.

Just as a Koch curve extends a line to infinity while all its proliferations are still bounded within a circle that could be drawn around the original triangle from which the curve was generated, so the infinite 'productions of time,' on the scale of event, are bounded still by a circle beyond which there is no curve, no time.

This is pure being, without becoming. Pure awareness without object.

I think it is the way out — but not a way you travel, since it is always where it is, there, timeless. It is not reached, it is realized. Take the goal as the path and be where you are.

8 January 2002

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a voice in the middle

woke me  
with one word  
only  
    and I understood

“Do not involve me  
in the ruin  
of your feelings

I love you entirely  
on the other  
side of what happens”

9 January 2002

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so many things to ask about

a peel of lilac coming off the sky  
over the mountains

they talk about rain but I see  
the core of a flower  
or a cave, a rock overhang really,

and under it a man sits  
knowing a dozen years  
until he is the same as what he knows

and there is nothing further than his hands.

9 January 2002

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Flags on their way to work  
Sad to think those pretty little rags  
Mean the only answer to death is to kill.

9.I.02

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Caught a word here and there  
smell of hot dust from the heater first time turned on  
winter values like a new color you never knew

I hear a creaking sound, it is the table under my writing hands  
speaking as they move, the part of wood  
people when I was little called the leaf,

the leaf with no tree, the singing leaf  
that tells the grain of the little I know straight as it can.

9 January 2002



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I was a gay scientist worried about stars  
No one can count me  
And I will leave all my chromosomes  
To the holographic museum on every main street  
Like a lover who wipes himself off with his mother's wedding dress  
The world folds back on itself fold upon fold  
With a snickering sound I try to persuade myself is just a dream  
Are these snarling bored animals all around what I mean by myself?

9 January 2002

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It depends on where my hand is in my heart  
how the children her to break out of school  
and run like silk flowers down the gutters  
to the park where left-handed games are waiting

they play them a tree here a tree there  
and you can never tell because I was made  
of sun meat once and stood on the deck  
of every burning sidewalk wanting the women

the light had just stopped happening on the  
movie screen inside the cool dark and Eden  
was over forever patrolled by bored angels  
with machine guns and no grief could ever

get through their sunglasses I was alone  
with my feelings stuck till the script was over  
and the boredom of human talk is followed  
by the boredom of silence again the children run

anything is better than school can't you remember?

10 January 2002

## THE THAW

Melt snow falls off the trees  
the pattern of bare branches  
everywhere different  
intricate and free —  
I sense but can't explain  
that every one of these  
continuous interscriptions  
of branch and twig and light and snow  
is the track or trace  
of someone's mind,  
not all the same one,  
visible evidence  
of what thinking is  
we all are doing  
struggling towards clarity  
parity beauty  
and the branches write it  
into the sky instructed  
by the bright mindspace  
of this one and that one  
you and me and he and she  
I mean the actual  
neighbor minds  
here shadowed outward  
in the form of trees  
lines of calligraphy  
in a lost language  
we find every day again  
breathless surprise  
the scribbled reality  
from which we come.

\*

I know too much about this inscribing mind  
the branches write the story all too clear  
and it is the same story to which they contribute  
episode and commentary mingled  
(a branch becomes its own shadow  
when the snow slips off) sudden thaw  
and all our stratagems are known.  
Pompey perishes, mystery of battle, why,  
why, and the silent anguish of those  
who have to watch the best and prettiest  
die in noisy agony. All the same story  
so many minds inscribe. I think I see  
the language of the world out there  
molecule by molecule outspoken hard  
not to interpret but just put to rest hidden  
someday in the green rags of springtime.

10 January 2002

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Say so, Mr Star,  
you don't. no god  
you say? Then who  
made the doubt

that lives in me  
at the core  
of every pleasure?

Isn't god doubt  
and sudden glory  
also flaming

in the middle of pain  
the unexpected  
outcome  
the unknown other

in the heart of the same?  
Just because you  
can flame all you desire,  
immoderate chemical,

that doesn't make me,  
inadequate from the beginning  
and always departing,  
able to be sure

the pain I bear  
is meaningless or merely  
ethical like a nice  
try or a good idea.

No ethics but reality  
no chemistry but poetry  
no mythology but fear —  
isn't this enough truth

to live in a world  
that may not ever be broken  
I mean that maybe  
never worked at all

until I do?

10 January 2002

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Measured by moons some pearls  
are always wanting  
                    like my skin  
confronted with so many other skins  
what can that mute attraction be?

Your father tried to explain his life  
as if you have none of your own—  
this he called Science, like high school,  
like beavers drinking milk shakes,  
like the Ninth of Thermidor. Sorry,  
that's history. Like Hitler on St Helena's.  
Like ambassadors immune from traffic lights,  
they call them *feu* in France, fire.

Of course he keeps forgetting what you are  
lost in his more and more imaginary who  
of you, the Relationship, the "tenderness  
on demand" you called it. Or I did.

But who was listening? Me vs world —  
what side are you on, beloved?  
Either party has its points, snowfall  
between midnight and dawn, wine  
in the sheets, a touch too playful  
to be tenderness itself this means,

like a man who claims to love you  
belong to the Louise Brooks Fan Club  
something is not right. The music stopped.

Long ago. Of course you pick the world.  
You like a fight but more than that  
you like to win. You like to please.  
Then punish for the pleasure given.

It oscillates all right. All night.  
Woodwork of the temple, our names  
carved together on the donor's panel,  
stuffed with greasy gold, the sacred  
character of lies  
that once told  
they last forever. I worry.

Out in the world's blue wanting  
we choose each other time and time again  
but we's a fuzzy number in this town  
though sacred, though intricate, though prime.

11 January 2002



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Spendthrift  
Snow  
Resiliences

A deck  
Apart from its ship.

The moon  
Abaft its light.

Everything  
Stands behind you  
Tonight.

11 January 2002

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My hands are so far away  
my feet are never, are nowhere  
this is going to sleep or somewhere  
going and then gone and all I know  
is my hands are somewhere else from me

11 January 2002

then it was never and a now  
was wasted by the ruined stream

how could all that water break

shards of it that cut the human feet  
that tried to write their essay in those woods

nowhere saying this is where you stay

it seems to me at your side  
it seems to me not separate

you are the only thing that ever happened to me

11 January 2002